

A Helljumper's Flight

by Sulkon088

Category: Halo

Genre: Adventure, Sci-Fi

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2006-06-02 02:07:28

Updated: 2007-09-22 23:39:54

Packaged: 2016-04-27 02:08:54

Rating: T

Chapters: 12

Words: 22,503

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: The story of the ODST 3rd Company send in to safeguard New Mombasa aftter the events of Halo 2 and leading up to Halo

3Disclaimer all that is said here is fiction. Chapter 10 is up

1. A Line is Drawn

Chapter 1

UNSC Destroyer _Patton _

10.30.2552 (Military Calendar)

0:45 Minutes Into the 2nd Major Covenant Assault on Earth

Position: Holding close orbit with Battle Cluster Omega over Earth.

How can this be happening? Thought Captain James Cupor as he watched the massive Covenant Fleet poured out of slip space. Even though every military officer above and on Earth had known about it he still had to steady himself on the console aboard his bridge as he saw the sight. However even as he had just flinched he soon realized he had a duty to attend to and wiped any sign of fear of his face. There was a civilization to save and he wouldn't be caught dead just sitting around waiting for it to happen.

He turned to his executive officer to get the blood pumping throughout the entire vessel. "Bring the ship up to combat alert Alpha I want everyone ready for whatever the Covenant wants to throw at us." Soon he would have orders and soon all of the human race would be set up on a gamble as to whether the UNSC stopped the Covenant from reaching their goal. Already voices crackled to life over the com channel.

"Attention fleet this is Admiral Loran, we have standing orders to

engage immediately, I repeat assign targets and fire with extreme prejudice!" A stern voice ordered from the Orbital Station Pacific. Cupor ordered his navigation officer to set an intercept vector with the closest enemy position. All around the massive Human fleet above Earth took off for their targets. The orbital MAC guns were loaded and firing as well as the safeties of every weapon possible were being removed for one of the greatest matches of all time. Already Fleet Admiral Harper and the George Washington II had obliterated a Covenant Carrier with the Cruisers MAC cannons before the Patton was even in range of anything.

"Bring us to MAC range lieutenant, and prepare a firing solution on the nearest cruiser. Push the reactors to 95." Cupor ordered just as the first ships of his battle group began their assaults. All around the human vessels of titanium and steel raced forward while the Covenant forward ships charged their plasma cannons. Mini cannons fired quickly shredding the Covenant picket craft as the UNSCs ships prepared their bigger guns. The Patton followed suit behind a duo of UNSC frigates starting a spearhead attack on the same cruiser. "Archer pod status?" Cupor asked as a squadron of Longsword fighters soared by engaging a group of Covenant Seraphs. His weapons officer Lieutenant Naphoo, a tan skinned man originally from Mars replied within a minute.

"Sir! All archer pods are ready and waiting. MAC cannon range is estimated around 2 minutes." Naphoo spoke as the Patton's AI Brutis informed Cupor of the weapons on the attacking cruiser. "Enemy Plasma cannons are charging captain estimated launch time imminent." Cupor looked ahead and saw the frigates powering up their MACs already, as well as opening their Archer Pod Launch Tubes. Even at 59 the wizened captain's eyes noted the impending line of Covenant capitol ships getting larger by the second.

The captain's thoughts gave way as he heard a crew member issuing a warning. "Captain Enemy is launching main weapons!" Cupor watched as the cruiser launched a quartet of plasma torpedoes at the human ships.

"ETA on the torpedoes!" Cupor yelled as he saw the forward frigates launch their MAC cannons. The huge tungsten rounds tore clean through the gap as Naphoo replied .

"ETA is less than a minute cap." The officer shouted from across the deck. "MAC cannons live and heating up draining the reactor core at 5 a minute. Range in 20 seconds." Brutis noted, as the frigate's MAC rounds and the plasma torpedoes passed themselves while soaring toward their targets. At the same time the weapons officer informed Cupor that the MAC cannons were primed and loaded.

"ETA in 15 seconds!" Someone yelled as Cupor watched the first plasma torpedo slam head on with the furthest frigate. The ship was sliced right through the middle as the superheated weapon boiled through the titanium layers within a millisecond. Then the second torpedo blasted straight through the other frigate's engines. The smaller ship exploded in a flare of bright light and Cupor had to turn to shield his eyes from the glare but he quickly shouted another order. The Patton passed by the ruined ship and continued onward bearing down on its enemy. Up ahead the two frigate's MAC rounds roared in at their target.

"Fire MAC cannons! Launch all archer pods now! Fire at will! And push the reactors to 105."

The Patton shook as the two MAC cannons fired off. A second after all the archer pods from the tip of the ship to the engines fired off toward the cruiser, however right in front of the destroyer, the last two plasma torpedoes were zeroing in. "Engage evasive maneuvers now!" The captain shouted as Brutis guided the ship in to a dive narrowly missing the first torpedo. However the second did not miss and headed straight for the ship. The torpedo sheered into the Titanium A plating instantly vaporizing most of the lower decks but it didn't quite reach the engines which was of some value to the crew.

Cupor watched as the human weapons finally met with results. The first MAC cannon round was intercepted by a small Covenant vessel but the second careened right into the cruiser. In an instant the massive ship's shields flashed and collapsed and then the Patton's arsenal met the ships.

The faster Archer missiles impacted first breaking up the outer armor and destroying a great number of turrets and then the Patton's MAC rounds hit. The two behemoth weapon rounds collided against the mighty war vessel cracking through the armor and then exploding against the ship's inner core. The huge ship split in two and then was engulfed as its core went critical.

"Captain the last torpedo is arcing around and tracking us. ETA in 30 seconds." Cupor looked at the aft view cam and watched as the deadly weapon started to close in on his ship. "Prepare to fire off the Emergency boosters now."

Volatile chemicals mixed and reacted, firing off and causing the ship to shake and then veer to the left far faster then it was meant to go. "Reactor meltdown in 2 minutes captain." Brutis alerted Cupor as he held onto the safety rail for his life. "Just shut up and fly the ship!"

Even with the boosters sending the ship off in a slight roll the torpedo easily trailed the ship. "Sir target is gaining speed, matching, topping. Sounding impact alarms!" Klaxons blared all over the ship and the crews all rushed for something that was bolted down or even something heavy like one of the ship's Pelicans. The torpedo blasted in. This time through the upper decks and then exploded against the left MAC cannon. The massive weapon ignited and then burst sending the ship reeling into a faster roll.

"Brutis get us out of this roll. I want a damage assessment now, how soon can we have our remaining MAC cannon locked and loaded again." The bridge crew and Brutis quickly got to their tasks moving as quickly as they equipment could take them. Someone started relaying casualties numbers but the voice was soon drowned out by everyone else as Cupor looked out the forward viewport. He breathed a slow sigh of relief even as more ships around him moved pass his ship and engaged the enemy. He and most of his crew had just escaped death by sheer luck but even with that small relief he felt an ominous weight on him. He looked out towards where the two other frigates were slowly breaking apart.

How was it fair, almost three ships for one. He knew that he had been lucky enough to survive the engagement but even so it dawned on him

how many men and women had just lost their lives for the sake of so many down below. His focus once again returned to the bridge as the com officer alerted him. "Sir priority alpha signal from FLEETCOM." Cupor made sure his officer cap was straight and then replied. "Put it on the main screen." The image of stalwart Admiral Hood appeared in the _Patton's_ bridge and various crew members chanced a glance at one of the best Admirals humanity had left. "Admiral Hood sir." Cupor managed a strict salute. "As you were James," Hood spoke as Cupor changed his stance. "Captain I have a priority one mission for 3rd Company and I need you to high tail it back to a drop position ASAP. Uploading coordinates now." Hood motioned to an off camera person and then Brutis stroked his holographic beard as he entered the coordinates into the navigation console.

"Coordinates loaded Admiral may I inquire as to what kind situation has arisen to call my ship back from the fight." Hood looked at someone off screen and for a second his expression changed. "Not for your ears captain I need you to switch me over to 3rd company CO. once you drop your charges you're to hold position with the _Cairo_ and get back in this fight. Hood out." The image collapsed just as a Human cruiser broke apart under a Covenant barrage. "Yes, sir." Cupor said softly as he let things go over in his mind.

3rd company was the entire complement of the _Patton's_ ODST. The company was known to have results that were top of the line. They had served at every possible engagement since the beginning of the war taking casualties at every turn but they had always stayed strong. It was also common knowledge that a contingent of 3rd company had been aboard the Pillar of Autumn when it found the original Halo and that the troops had been one of the greatest assets in the hellish ring world. And now they were being ordered to ground the group somewhere at earth even though there was already a huge number on the ground there. Cupor pondered the situation as the remains of a Covenant destroyer started burning up in the atmosphere not far off.

2. Operation Earthbound

****UNSC Destroyer Patton****

****10.30.2552 (Military Calendar) ****

****ODST Ready Room****

Major Eli Yoriskov passed the Helljumpers under his command. The emotionless soldiers stood at the ready as their commanding officer passed them. "Listen up comrades, the admiralty has been nice enough to let us shake hands with those Covenant bastards trying to get their claws on Earth so we are headed groundside, Hard drop! Everyone stow your gear and kiss space goodbye, its time to fight on good old fashioned dirt. Dismissed!"

The marines rushed off the ship's inner lighting bouncing off their black armor as they moved for their HEVs. PFC Davin Pearce moved quickly making sure his gear was locked in just before his pod's hatch slammed shut in front of his nose. The excitement pulsed through his veins as he heard the ship's AI spoke over his helmet speakers. "Launching 1st platoon now." and in a second his HEV fell away into Earth's space.

The ride down to familiar havens did not comfort Pearce in the least. His console display showed the rest of his company as they headed down toward their LZ. Then a new image popped over showing data of the area his squad had been assigned to. "Where is this?" he thought to himself as his pod broke through the atmosphere and the armored skin of the HEV started peeling away. Realizing he would find out soon enough, he put his head back against the pod wall and then main chute blew. The tiny vehicle hit the air pocket created by the chute and then it started descending a second later a bit slower this time until seconds after the chute ejected and Pearce clenched his teeth.

The HEVs sank into the flattened area and soon after the main hatch blew open and Pearce quickly climbed out in a bit of a rush. All around him he watched as other pods crashed against the ground spraying dirt and gravel everywhere. One came so close that had his helmet not had a visor the gravel could have blinded him.

He linked up with Sergeant Loran and then took a quick look around and finally recognized their location. 3rd company stood outside the ruins of New Mombasa where the last battle had been. He had heard sketchy reports since he had been in cryo during the first battle but he had heard that one of the oh holy prophets themselves had come near this area during the battle and then hightailed it out of there tearing up the entire city with a atmospheric slip space jump something that had only recently come to light for most marines.

Even at 20 miles from the city pieces of debris had traveled and a marine almost tripped over the top of a car that had been embedded in the sand. The roar of pelicans overhead crashed through Pearce's ears and he watched as the dropships deposited several carrier warthogs along with some Scorpion tanks. Within a half an hour the whole company was loaded onto vehicles and moving through the city toward their goal.

Passing through the wide boulevards all around the helljumpers looked as other marines worked hard at collecting bodies and trying to repair vehicles that dotted the streets. Everywhere from the chrome skyscrapers to the civilian hogs the previous battle was not hard to miss. Most of the civilians had managed to escape before the hard fighting had begun, but every once in a while Pearce's eyes watched as troops excavated a non uniformed body and a twinge of sorrow and anger went through all the marines.

Finally the vehicles stopped at a staging area. All around marines and MPs were hard at work building up defenses as well as digging fire pits. Pearce exited the truck bed and followed his squad as Loran's voice came over his com. "Ok maggots the major says that this area is not to be entered by anything that looks or even smells alien. We've been assigned to grid 4D lets move it double time!" The squad moved off in the direction of one of the corners of the massive plaza.

3. Can't we Talk this Over?

Chapter 3

New Mombasa

****10.31.2552 (Military Calendar) ****

****Excavation Site 100 meters below ground level.****

"Listen Ackerson, I don't care who you think you are but if you want something from down there, then you go and get it, we've already lost enough marines just with the damn war. You want it? You get it!" the general ended and then moved off overseeing the rest of the excavation. Ackerson's cold eyes followed the man for a second and then turned to the man standing next to him. "If you want something done you've got to do it yourself." He slightly jerked his head toward the shaft leading further down.

The man next to him was clad in a grey officer uniform with no rank or name tag but a single emblem was on the left shoulder. On it was a black background and white print USNC logo. The uniform barely covered the man and most of the nearby marines could see the massive muscles that seemed to want to rip through the uniform. The man quickly moved toward the shaft, swiftly grabbed a tool belt and then stood over the shaft. He took a quick glance around to make sure no one was watching and then leapt down into the pitch black shaft into the abyss below.

Pearce readjusted the sight on the machine gun for the twentieth time in three hours bored as ever. "PEARCE!" Loranž shouted over his helmet com. The young marine jerked quickly as he turned down the volume control on the helmet and then responded. "Yes sir?" he asked trying to keep the sleepiness out his voice. "Major wants a word with all squads. Give Deec a whirl at the machine gun. I'm brining a warthog over to take you to the meet." Loranž guff voice spoke as Pearce heard the growing sound of a warthog approaching and dismounted from the machine gun turret waking up Deec as he passed.

"Ok men the navy boys have their hands full with the Covenant right now but they seem to be holding them off so we have a bit of peace for the time being." Major Yoriskov spoke to the gathered Helljumpers. "We never really figured out what the bastard of a Prophet wanted down here but we seem to have found the rough area of where whatever he was looking for is and it is our objective to keep the area secure if the covenant managed to break through the fleet."

The major looked over his shoulder at a officer who had appeared and nodded. "Yes lieutenant what is it?" Alarms blared on in the plaza, red lights started flashing everywhere and Pearce looked around for some threat. "Speak of the devil. It seems they managed to sneak some phantoms past the defense grid and their headed in. Alright marines! Lock and load we have targets inbound lets we have pain to serve!" the major moved off following the Lieutenant.

Pearce followed his squad to their defense points and making sure his BR55 was ready for anything. Already the Scorpions were spinning around and calibrating their sights on all avenues of attack. All around AA fire spewed upward managing to destroy a group of Phantoms trying to land in the direct area. The heavy turrets spewed 120mm rounds at the rest of the dropships but the rest of the flight gained altitude and managed to evade their fire.

The first few Phantoms dropped loads of Elites, Grunts and Jackals down on the street service along with a few ghosts and one Wraith. A Scorpion cannon round tore through one Phantom crashing it down on the troops it had just released and then the enemy started toward the Helljumper's position."

Still a good distance away the company snipers opened up on the Covenant forces bringing down as many Elites as possible as fast as they could and then the Jackal snipers started firing back. High power plasma beams ripped through the air slicing a marine close to Pearce and he ducked low to avoid another plasma lance that ripped through the barrier nearby. Soon enough a human sniper took notice of the attacker and brought the alien down with two rounds clean through the creature's neck.

Pearce muttered a silent thanks to whoever his guardian had been and then looked back over his cover. The aliens were heading right in.

4. New Arrivals amongst the Sands

****New Mombasa****

****10.31.2552 (Military Calendar) ****

****Plaza of the Angels ****

****Defense Point Gamma****

"Fire off surprise one!" Loranž shouted over the com and two marines pulled a group of pins. 20 Lotus mines fired off killing a horde of Jackals and Grunts but the a good number of Elites had smelt the trap and had hung back. An Elite officer made a hand motion and 3 Ghosts sped through the carnage of the pervious chaos. The vehicles sped over the bodies of their comrades spewing fire as they came. A Helljumper tried to fire a rocket off at the lead vehicle, but a hidden sniper fired through the poor man's armor killing him in an instant.

The marines around opened fire with SMGs and battle rifles trying to knock the drivers off managing to bring one craft down but the two others kept firing on exposed marines. Pearce emptied a clip into the nearest Ghost, primed a grenade and then rolled for cover. In a second the driver noted the device and tried to pull back but he was not fast enough. The grenade detonated and the Ghost flipped over sending the Violet armored Elite crashing into the ground. The alien roared in anger and opened fire with his plasma carbine at a few of the marines.

The men under fire would have been cut down by the barrage but a warthog appeared out of nowhere running down the mighty warrior. The driver stopped the vehicle and allowing the gunner to bring the jeep's Gauge cannon to bear on the remaining Ghost. The enemy vehicle tried to swerve out of the way but the gunner expertly landed 3 rounds square at the driver blowing the vehicle in two. Someone let out a small cheer but more aliens were arriving and they were nearing the barricades. Pearce moved up with the rest of the troops and started firing on the new line of enemy soldiers.

Elite Taskmaster Te 'Ikanee watched the human deployment around the target structure. He clicked his mandibles as a pair of the human tanks fired against one of the Wraiths breaking the heavy tank in two with an explosion of bright blue. Red hot anger pulsed through 'Ikanee that the humans had once again defiled the most saintly of holy places. His objective was pure as his iron will to serve and he would be sure to attain it. He ordered the next division to rush forward even though he knew a horde of his brethren surely went to their deaths. The human's automatic weapons fired upon his forces and the leading jackals brought their shields down to brace against the human projectiles. 'Ikanee marveled at the his own ingenuity as a group of jackal snipers braced their rifles atop the plasma shields and started attacking the humans.

To I'kanee's pleasure at least 12 of the infidels fell before they could even realize what was happening but more continued to fall as the purple lances of energy soared out and found their targets. The strategy was working greatly until a foolish grunt decided to have a spark of courage. The stupid methane breather rushed out with a fuel rod cannon and pushed through the jackal line breaking apart the shield wall. A violet elite roared and rushed in trying to move the fool but an enemy sniper shot him just as he reached the grunt. The heavy body slammed down on the grunt sending the fuel rod cannon bounding away. However the insult to the injury was not finished. As the body crumpled it also knocked a pair of jackals down continuing to break the jackal line. Sure enough the humans saw the leak and poured a barrage into the exposed sides of the jackals. The line of shields fell quickly and once more the fighting ensued with the humans keeping the covenant well away from entrance to the plaza that the Covenant valued so much.

Just arrived at the battlefield a Brute Captain named Valrune looked over the war zone from the security of a phantom with a squad of his brethren. The Jiralhanae had just witnessed the slaughter of the elite commander's last assault on the sacred site with a slight sense of disgust, not so much for the fallen elites and grunts but more that one of the so prophet blessed warriors had again miserably failed in his objective. Valrune made the order and a flight of Brute piloted banshees started their long trip toward the site.

Ackerson moved swiftly. He and the mysterious officer next to him moved to board one of the pelicans stationed within the plaza. A pilot was running through his preflight check before launching the ship off when he felt a sharp pain in his neck. The man fell unconscious, slumping up against the left side of the ship's cockpits as Ackerson entered the copilot seat. The bigger uniformed man unbuckled the pilot and carried the unconscious form out of the dropship and placing him behind three containers. Within a few moments the dropship lifted off rose quickly into the air and then flew off over the buildings for its flight home.

The fighting paused briefly as night fell across New Mombasa. An occasional sneak attack by stealth elites took a few lives but most were put down by the many marksmen that were hidden inside buildings and near crates of ammo and weapons. Fortunately it seemed the naval boys had plugged enough holes in the gap and the Covenants were licking their wounds and preparing for the next assault on the plaza. But the humans didn't have the lechery. They continuously sent out a pair of warthogs to raid the Covenant camps that dotted the city making sure that the alien bastards knew who still held their prized

objective. Amid one of the raids four dropships made it through to the plaza under the cover of a Longsword air strikes. The dropships unloaded 100 battle ready marines to supplement the plaza's beleaguered defenders. But as soon as dawn broke once more, the fighting returned to its maximum. The 3rd Company got back to work lining up 4 kinds of ugly in their sight and opened fire.

Pearce fired into the mob of shining armor, the Helljumpers and him kept a tight fire line doing their best to keep the Covenant squads back but still more and more came. Whereas earlier it had been a small gape in the naval lines it seemed like an open wound now. Along with the multitude of Phantoms, a full wing of Banshees had arrived and had opened fire all around the plaza burning down defenses and marines alike. The heavy AA guns weren't quick enough to track the faster smaller vessels and a large number of the craft continually made runs at excavation site.

However the major had reacted quickly and now four of the remaining LAAG Warthogs encircled the site making sure that the Banshees screamed no more and the battle ensued on slightly better terms. But even with this development the Major knew they still had a massive problem on their hands with the continuous strain of baddies. Yoriskov moved slowly around the command bunker a structure comprised of two bunkers that had been hard dropped at the start of the engagement. Techs handled the AA guns, radar and communications as the Major oversaw all the marines on several security monitors glowing against the cityscape. Amid the fury the naval boys had managed to hold up and it kept Yoriskov's mind a bit at ease that at least everything wasn't going bad at once.

And then a single transmission on the standard com channel brought the Majors hope for sites survival rise to the maximum.

The Helljumpers were in the middle of a shit storm when a new contact appeared amid the enemy. A heavily armored Pelican broke through the Covenant lines spewing fire from a pair of dual barreled heavy caliber auto-cannons. The guns worked wonders on the Covenant armor and a group Banshees crashed to the plaza in the ships' wake. But amidst the chaos a grunt got a luck shot off with a fuel rod cannon and it hit the ship's left engine with an explosion of eerie green. The craft shook over Pearce's position and started its descent. It scrapped against the concrete floor with a quick screech and then seemed to leap into a deadly spin knocking off a pair of ghosts that were not wise enough to evade. The craft finally came to a stop running right into a pair of prefab shelters near the excavation site.

Pearce looked back toward the enemy and fired once more. The last three of his rounds spent he checked through his belt for the next magazine and almost panicked when his hand felt nothing, not even a grenade. Looking down he found only his standard issue combat knife. He spotted a couple of ammo boxes not far off and sprinted for them. "Pearce! Keep your head down.!" Loranx shouted as he fired off his shotgun into a group of grunts that had snuck up on the squad's left side. The marines around the defenses were slowly but surely being cut down by the faster hitting and far deadlier plasma fire. More and more elites crossed the street to engage the hard pressed human forces. Loranx needed to be hot on his feet if he would survive this.

Pearce dove for cover as plasma fire sizzled the air around him. He crawled low and then got his back up against an ammo box and blindly reached his left arm into the container looking for clips. The outcome was a war welcome for all the day's miseries. He found 5 unspent BR magazines and found a satchel that he pulled out. A label on the satchel read C-15 Claymores. He pulled out one of the explosives and turned it around to see another welcoming phrase. He put the explosive back and then slung the satchel over his shoulder and then noticed movement around the crashed Pelican.

Will, Fred and Linda climbed out the wreckage as quickly as they could managed. The pilot hadn't survived the crash but the three Spartans were relatively able. All three were strewn with ammo packs, rockets, grenades and a shotgun and a rocket launcher was slung across each one's back. All in all the best sight any Marine on Earth could ask for at this moment in time. Fred spotted a marine near a pile of crates and motioned for his squad to follow him. The three armored beings moved swiftly toward the Helljumper and looked down at him. "Master chief sir!" the Helljumper barked as he looked back toward his squad's position. "Where's your CO Private?" Fred asked quickly as he kept an eye on the next Covenant attack wave and also watched a stream of data scrolling down his HUD.

"Major Yoriskov is at the command bunker sir!" the young marine replied sharply and then pointed toward the bunker at the center of the plaza. Fred nodded curtly and then looked at the defense positions strewn throughout the city center figuring out a plan. He switched on the squad freq and spoke to his squad mates. "Linda link up with the Major. Will you take the left side of the plaza, I got the right." Two acknowledgement lights winked and the two other Spartans moved out to complete their goals.

Fred looked back at the marine before him and looked toward the defense line. "Looks like we got some new party guests sir?" the marine reloaded his battle rifle with a familiar click. "Wanna pass out the beers?" behind his green armored helmet a small smirk crossed Fred's face. "Lead on marine." Fred quickly spoke.

Loranz fired his pistol straight for the blue elite's mouth but the alien's energy shields quickly deflected the rounds away from their target. The elite snarled and grabbed the man around the neck with an iron grip. The armored alien hoisted Loranz up and placed his plasma pistol against the man's helmet. "Pathetic." The elite growled as he pulled the trigger.

The shotgun rounds blew through the elites shield and punctured armor and flesh severing the arm. Loranz' head dropped with the arm and the plasma bolt sailed harmlessly away. The alien roared as purple blood poured from the stump that had been his arm and then looked at his assailants. Fred slammed the shotgun butt square into the alien's face shattering it's jar right into it's skull. The alien's corpse fell way as Loranz spat on the body looking towards the Spartan and Pearce. "Bout damn time Private." The sergeant muttered as he followed the Spartan and Pearce to the defenses.

Linda stared down the sniper rifle's scope and watched as Fred and the two helljumpers returned to the center of the fighting. She looked ahead of their path and nailed a pair of blue elites carrying needlers. She loaded a fresh clip into her rifle and then turned to find Will.

Yoriskov watched as the 3 Spartans expertly went about their work. One continually nailed approaching elites before they were even a danger keeping the command line confused and disoriented, while the other two worked with the marines keeping the entrances to the plaza clear. Hell maybe if we can get a couple more of them down here we could call it a day and grab some grub' the Major mused.

'Ikanee looked once more at the holy site and cursed. Though to be expected but not this soon in engagements the demon soldiers had arrived. These mysterious beings had always been the lead casualty makers and considered top priority targets by all within the Covenant. Believed to have been extinguished at a previous battle for one of the human's last strongholds, the warriors had made several new appearances starting with the hijacking of the mighty warship _Ascendant Justice_ and ending with the utter destruction of the battle station _Unyielding Hierophant_. And now it seemed they had come to spite 'Ikanee in his moment of glory.

A foul scent reached the elites nostril's and he turned. The stench came from the group of massive warriors that approached him. _Jiralhanae_ the elite cursed under his breath. 'Why are these vile beasts even allowed near the holy grounds.' The leader slightly taller than the others with a red gash streaked across his furred face moved toward 'Ikanee. "Your task is done taskmaster. I am here to take over the assault."

'Ikanee eyed the creature closely. "I have heard nothing of this Jiralhanae, get out of my face!" The brute smiled cruelly and reached for something. 'Ikanee thought he was making a grab his weapon and the elites fingers stretched for the hilt of his plasma sword. But the Brute produced a small blue orb that were common among officers of the Covenant to carry information of great importance. The elite opened his palm and the brute dropped the orb down. "All shall be revealed from within it. But your time in command here has come to an end."

5. Ok come and get It

****New Mombasa****

****11.1.2552 (Military Calendar) ****

****Plaza of the Angels ****

****Defense station Delta****

Will fired the rocket launcher right for the covenant mob. The Spectre took the full brunt of the attack and its compliment of elites fell to the street engulfed in flames. Will dumped the spent weapon and then lined up a approaching squad of grunts and jackals with his battle rifle. In ones and twos the aliens started to fall and soon a pair of marines joined the firefight allowing the Spartan to look toward more serious threats. Though Linda and the other snipers continuously dropped the dangerous elite warriors more and more spilled through with additional reinforcements. 'Navy must be having a hell of time up there.' Will thought as he fired at an approaching gold armored elite. The tall alien roared ferociously and kept running. About 5 meters from Will the massive alien lit up his

energy sword. Will expertly lunged out and tackled the enemy managing to receive a mere scrap on his forearm from the powerful weapon.

The Spartan pinned the alien with all the strength he could muster making sure that the sword remained on the ground. With his left arm Will punched for the elites face. The first punch broke against the energy shield and the elite roared trying to get free. But all the strength of all his fallen brethren fueled Will to hang on. The elite's tremendous will pushing back at him the Spartan while the human pulled with all his strength at the alien arm with the sword still grasped. Realizing his intentions the elite cried out in horror as Will plunged the alien's own sword straight through the stomach. The alien went limp and Will pulled the sword from its place, and latched it on to his supply belt and then returned to the fighting.

A massive group of Wraith mortar tanks approached the battle site. The pilots broke off in pairs to engage the human forces as banshees roared in ahead. The attack craft had barely entered the plaza before they were under fire of the human LRVs but they would keep the primitive warrior's attention for a few seconds. The mortar cannons were calibrated and then the pilots opened fire. Almost in unison the first of many waves of 20 plasma comets roared over and then started arcing down on their prey.

Linda fired once and then fired again. Two banshees crashed against a skyscraper pilot less and then Linda adjusted her aim to find new target. But before she found a target she heard screams of a marine and the sound of an explosion. She glanced toward the source and saw the upper torso of a marine trying to crawl away from a crater. _Damn Tanks!_ She looked up and saw scores of blue comets arcing downward towards the defensive positions. She cued the UNSC general freq. "Marines we have inbound mortar fire!" she stood up to move positions and then heard it. She looked up and saw a single mortar round dropping right for her. Just before the round crashed into her post she leapt away from the structure and landed right atop a banshee.

With lightning speed she tore open the canopy to displace the driver. But instead of the sleek formed armor of an elite she started into the howling face of a brute. Nonetheless surprise was on her side. She kicked hard with all her strength and the pilot was booted out of his ship and sent hurling toward the ground as Linda grabbed hold of the controls and steered the ship after a group of other attackers.

All over the fighting raged on. Marines fired, and then reloaded and then fired again. Targets were never scarce. One turned a heavy machine gun and fired into the crowd. The Covenant forces in close were easily shredded under the barrage before the enemy troops were able to retreat back. A major savior was that the enemy did not have a major airpower to concern the humans and the AA guns continued to pelt any drop ship trying to get in close. But it was not to last.

Pearce hurled another grenade at the onslaught this one included 4 squads of grunts, 3 squads of jackals and 10 supervising elites all veterans judging by their crimson armor. The marines were being hammered. Reinforcements were no longer available since most were being sent topside to help defend the MAC stations as well as the

guns' power generators so the group was on their own as they had been for most of this operation. Pearce reloaded his rifle and fed some new rounds into his shotgun and watched the Spartan as the soldier hurled a pair of grenades dead on at the oncoming forces. The two grenades were timed perfectly. In the time it took the two to reach their target they had one second before igniting. Both bounced off the first elite's shields and then dual explosions rocked the front lines of the enemy.

Fred unslung his battle rifle and fired against the enemy, but after only 9 rounds the rifle jammed up to Fred's astonishment. An elite seemed to see the surprise through the Spartan's helmet and rushed forward. However this time it was Loran's turn to help out. The helljumper looked down the sniper scope and opened up on elite. Three armor piercers soared through shield and armor and the elite crumpled down on the street. The Spartan grabbed the fallen soldier's carbine and then swatted a nearby jackal across the alien's elongated mouth. As the Jackal fell limp Fred crouched below the wreckage of a downed Ghost and reloaded his weapons. As he reloaded the his battle rifle he pulled the loading lever and the jammed shell flew out from the rifle. Sliding a new magazine into place Fred popped out from cover and started firing again.

Loran watched as the green armored super soldier strafed his way from cover to cover reigning alien death as he went. The sergeant shouted over the squad com. "Listen up ladies we can't let Master Chief have all the fun lets show those bastards who'sâ€¦!" a purple plasma beam lanced through Loran's heart and the marine fell against the defense barrier. "SARGE!" someone yelled as Pearce and Olfren bent down over Loran but it was too late. The sarge's pulse was gone before they reached him and then the deafening sound of a AA turret caught Pearce's attention. He looked back just in time to see a massive explosion in the center of the compound. After the dust lifted the wreckage of one of the AA turrets could be seen. "Dammit!" a marine shouted as the squad looked for the attackers.

Another wave of Banshees had arrived and decisively evened the odds as they destroyed the first AA turret. The Warthogs turned their sights on the new threat and opened fire but more and more of the attack craft poured in. The craft immediately set their sights on the Warthogs and destroyed several using their fuel rod cannons. All over the jeeps flipped and tumbled as the Banshees went to work against them as well as any marines that crossed their path. But one of the attack craft pulled up the rear behind three of the ships and opened fire with the ship's plasma cannons.

Two enemy banshees quickly fell as Linda poured fire into their engines and then launched fuel rod missiles at another fighter. But within the few seconds of realizing that a enemy was amongst them several banshees had already set their sights on Linda's craft and she pulled hard right to avoid plasma fire. She engaged in as many maneuvers as the ship allowed but the enemy pilots were good. She repeatedly pulled low over the plaza and on her first run had managed to crash one stupid pilot into the concrete but the others did not fall for the ploy. Linda pulled the small craft skyward trying to lose her hunters.

Pearce and his squad were being lit up with plasma fire from the approaching troops as well as a pair of banshees when a familiar sight appeared. A Gauge Warthog flew in firing its heavy rounds

against the two airships clipping the wing off the first and obliterating the second.

The passenger riding shotgun fired with a battle rifle to cover the marines as they got back to their defense positions. The private looked at the gunner and saw one of the other Spartans as the being pulled the loading lever on the large cannon. The tall warrior looked down at him and the squad. "We're not done yet marines!" he said as his driver gunned the vehicle and headed off back to his own sector.

Fred peaked around the corner to find his targets. A pair of grunts rushed in and Fred slammed his rifle into the first one and then ripped the methane breather off the next both alien's dropped silently to the ground without a sound and then an ear splitting roar filled Fred's Helmet speakers. He realized what the threat was 5 seconds before the first grenade hit the crate he was crouched against. The force of the Brute shot still shocked him that the Covenant had this kind of firepower. _Brutes!_ Fred looked longingly for a rocket launcher nearby but none were insight. Having seen John wrestle with one of the beasts at the _Hierophant_ battle station, Fred did not feel the immediate need to tangle with one in hand to hand. Three more brute rounds bashed against his cover with such force that the crate bashed against his shield. Then click, the creature's weapon clicked empty and Fred burst into action.

The mighty Spartan was faster then the brute had anticipated. Heavily augmented reflexes and speed allowed Fred to prime a grenade, roll it toward the creature's feet and then rolled to avoid the blaze of a sniper beam. The grenade blew catching the lead brute's foot with it but his brethren did not falter. Two other massive furred aliens ran forward toward Fred. A human sniper rifle sounded and a round penetrated through the first brutes eyes and within a second another hit the second brute. This round aimed again at the eye was slightly higher and it hit the brute's helmet. The super heated bullet melted the helmet's brim into the brute's eye. The creature howled in range and ripped the helmet from his face taking it's left eye with it. Yet through the pain the creature managed a last glance at the green armored alien as he brought his weapon to bear.

Pearce watched as the Spartan finished off the brute with a three quick three round burst from his battle rifle. This was the first time that Pearce like all other marines in the plaza had ever seen one of the new assailants known as the brutes and it didn't give him any more sympathy toward the group of alien scumbags that had been fighting his race all the way to extinction as the Spartan finished it off. But this was only a teaser before long Brutes were leading the assaults against the plaza. While Spartans could take the monsters one on one the marines didn't stand a chance.

Fred moved back down toward friendly territory as plasma fire followed his course. He ran at full pace to avoid the enemy fire and then looked across the plaza watching the scene before him. More and more of the helljumpers fell against the brute shots as well as the red hot plasma nailed the helljumpers. At a sickening pace the brutes rushed over the human corpses and pouring into the plaza. In a tight perimeter the remaining marines once more started firing on the approaching enemy using any means necessary even hurling spent ammo clips to try to buy as much time as they could.

The few remaining warthogs sped over spewing fire from the jeeps' chain guns trying to diminish the enemy troops but where one grunt fell, three more and a jackal would take its place. It seemed as if the Plaza of the Angels was about to finally switch hands. Every able man and woman defending the plaza was starting to wear down with all the fighting they were enduring. Slowly but surely they were falling further and further inward toward the command bunker and the remaining AA guns. Every one of them knew that defeat couldn't be allowed but most did acknowledge that soon they would have to either flee or die where they stood. But 3rd Company and the a few Spartans were not about to give up just yetâ€¦|.

6. Second thoughts and 50 attacks later

****New Mombasa****

****11.1.2552 (Military Calendar) ****

****Plaza of the Angels ****

****Command Bunker****

The Major watched as the marines fell back closer and closer toward the dig site. Beyond the retreated soldiers were hundreds of corpses of the Covenant. Every once in a while he noted a human body but it pleased him greatly for the punishment that his company had been dishing out. But yet again the precision of the Helljumpers was nothing short of miraculous. Even with the loss of so many marines the hundred and some odd got right back to fighting as soon as they reached the stockade emplacements about 200 feet from the bunker. Through the fighting marines gathered more ammo and supplies just as others helped with the reloading of rocket launchers and other heavy weapons. The major even saw two men reloading a battle rifle and a shotgun and just placing it near a Spartan so the warrior had a continuous string of ready and available weapons. With eerie precision the Spartan fired into the approaching storm, first with the battle rifle to attack the commanding elites and brutes and then to the shotgun to finish off the jackals and grunts. But even as the soldier was skilled above almost everyone fighting out there the marines stayed strong. Most if not all the squads had been dismembered by a number of casualties but most has reassembled into countless fire teams that pushed through their exertion and poured shells into the alien charges. One of the Spartans, the one that had been holding the left side entered the room. "SPARTAN-043 reporting sir, with the loss of the forward perimeter I have a new mission objective to find whatever the Covenant want, and destroy it before it falls to their hands." The major nodded and directed him to the marine foreman in charge of the excavation and the two headed out.

The major returned his eyes to the battlefield once more and saw another Spartan amongst the marines as the group fell back under the cover of a machine gunner. As soon as they reached the barrier the Spartan turned along with several marines and launched a few grenades back at the enemy lines. The explosives rocked the enemy lines taking a good amount of elites to the major's pleasure. And then he saw it. Something moving fast and deadly, a massive form leading a new squad onto the killing field. The Spartan saw it the same time as the major and the warrior dropped his rifle and reached for a blade.

Fred foresaw the attack and managed to ready himself against the brute's charge. In a split second he was positioned to dodge the creature's first attack, and then plunge his blade through it's spine but a jackal had seen the movement and decided to save the unsuspecting alien's life. A bright purple beam sliced through Fred's right shoulder pad, passed into his neck armor and grazed his skin as it traveled back out of the opposite shoulder pad. Shock overpowered his nerves and for a few second Fred didn't feel the searing pain and then it hit him.

He dropped the combat knife and knelt down placing his hand against the back of his neck and then he looked up. The brute was right on top of him raising it's might weapon so as to cut Fred's neck off. Fred kept his eyes wide open and tried to will his muscles to move his body from the blade and then a green explosion disintegrate the brutes form.

Pearce and another marine did their best to prop up the massive Spartan and carry him off and then Pearce saw the Spartan's guardian. A Banshee headed off and at first Pearce believed it had been simple friendly fire but another squadron of other Banshees was pursuing this one opening fire as they came. Pearce concentrated on getting the Spartan's form into the bunker and then suddenly he almost tripped as the Spartan regained his balance and the two marines stared in astonishment. "Master chief you ok?" the other marine asked as they saw the Spartan bend down and pick up a plasma carbine from an elite corpse.

Fred had been through a lot., basic camp under Chief Mendez, horrible and unspeakable augmentations and then a slew of Special Ops missions and now the Covenant war had shoved and punished Fred with about everything imaginable. He'd even survived a Covenant mortar round with a lucky roll and a few scratches but the searing in him now was something unimaginable. He couldn't hear the marine asking him his condition all that he felt and heard was burning agony pulsating through his being. Without his training he was sure that he would have gone into shock and simply lay there until a Covenant killed him but millions could die if he did, just that and by sheer will he pushed himself into a new fury and accessed his squad freq. "Spartans acknowledge." No Oly oly oxen free came to him this time but in a few seconds acknowledgement lights winked. "Will report?" remembering the fail safe mission he knew Will's answer before the other Spartan even finished. "I've got what they are looking for. I'm uploading imagery now." Will said as Fred reloaded a pair of SMGs. As the uplink appeared in the upper left point of his screen he averted his eyes and studied the image.

Pearce tracked a grunt and brought the alien down with two bursts. The aliens were rushing the bunker in sporadic groups but the marine knew that soon the hordes would rush in. The marines kept their wits though. They did their best to keep two steps ahead of the Covenant mowing down any approaching squads before they became a threat, but without the warthog support the banshees were weighing heavily on marines. A marine locked on with a rocket launcher and managed a great shot to bring one of the craft down but it seemed that more just kept coming and the jackal sniper's weren't letting up either. Everyone was crouched low keeping their helmets out of sight and every now and then popping up for a quick burst or blast with a rifle or shotgun. As Pearce reloaded his weapon and laid some grenades out

he looked for any of the Spartans. As far as he could tell one of them was in the dig site another was still fighting in a captured banshee and the last one was continually rotating around the bunker with a steady string of destruction in his path. Those guys were something else he thought. He'd seen all of them go through gut wrenching fights in the hours that he'd been serving under them and now he regretted all the casual bashing that he and his squad mates had done during breaks or leave. Those freaks as he had called them before were a major factor in the most hellish setting on Earth and they didn't seem to tire at all. He never once saw one of them stop, they merely paused to reload or grab a new weapon. The ultimate killing machine in his eyes, even so the marines still had the task of trying to keep up with them and Pearce ordered the squad back into action. In seconds the marines were back in action fighting and dieing to preserve all hopes of humanity.

Twenty Warthogs and 5 Scorpion MBTs started their way through the wide city lanes of New Mombasa. As they sped through the lead jeep's gunners opened up with the massive chain guns and cleared a path through the banshee fighters. Painted the sides of each jeep was a grey and white eagle extending it's talons with a crimson sun in the background. The 4th company of the 88th Armored Division headed for their objective intent on blasting anything non human in their path. Lives were at stake and the drivers pushed their vehicles to the limits as the group turned left and soared down a boulevard.

Fred looked over the image on his screen and something dawned on him. "I've seen that before." He thought to himself and then nailed a elite with his shotgun. "Or at least something close to it, run databanks." He spoke as he reloaded the weapon. 'Already have, it's an almost direct match to the markings of the stones at Sigma as well as those markings on Reach. Im sure its what they are after, but this one is different. It has another map which Cortana assessed to be a star map of some kind but there is another set of those weird symbols on this rock. Another map I believe." Will said as Linda ran a strafing run near the command bunker slicing through a brute and a squad of jackals. Fred was glad to have her watching his back. Even with a full squadron following her Linda expertly executed attack runs that bought Fred the leisure of talking to Will for a few seconds. "What in the hell is a Covenant artifact doing buried on Earth." Fred thought and then heard a shotgun shell being loaded into a barrel. "Will what are you doing?" Fred asked as he looked at a new string of enemies headed toward the bunker."

"We got orders, do not let the Covenant get what they want. It's our mission to destroy it." "Hold your fire, think about it, if we destroy what the enemy wants yes we take away their prize but im willing to bet that even if they loose that map they can still wipe us out and run scans and eventually figure things out especially if I think that's what I think it is. Bring it topside ASAP over." He moved from cover and attacked a squad of jackals.

Will glimpsed outside the shaft and made sure there was no enemies around and then hauled himself up. He found Fred reloading a rocket launcher as the Covenant launched another raid. Two spectres raced out in front of the troop divisions and started raining plasma on the marines. Most were able to duck from the fire but a few were caught under the barrage bringing their numbers down once more. Fred saw his approach and saw a metal case latched onto Will's utility belt. "I hope you know what you're doing Master Chief." He said as he rotated

positions with Fred and fired into a small gap in the barrier. With deadly accuracy Will nailed a charging brute as well as his jackal compatriot.

Fred rethought things over and still came to the same decision. Disobeying UNSC HIGHCOMM orders was top of the line treason and he knew that but he had known ever since seeing the first image of the artifact that he had a duty to Humanity and that it required finding out where the map lead them. Fred opened up a direct line to FLEETCOM and spoke. "This is SPARTAN- 104 I need transfer to Lord Hood ASAP." Over Earth the request was bounced off the remaining COMSATS and eventually arrived at the _Cairo_. The communications officer read the report and turned to Lord Hood. "Admiral we have a priority alpha message from SPARTAN-104 sir.

Lord Hood took his gaze away from the space battle overhead. He wouldn't say the fighting was not worth gazing upon but the ship board marines had repelled over 20 assaults by now and a group of Destroyers were maintaining position around the station and for the moment no Covenant cruisers were in the kill zone. He quickly turned to the officer. "Patch it through Lieutenant." The officer punched some buttons and then a deep voice came over the speakers on the bridge. "Sir I have located the target interest of the Covenant." Hood nodded and the replied within a moment. "You have your orders Chief, destroy the object." Hood's mind was racing with all that was happening around the battle station and then he realized something was going on and it centered on a Spartan having second thoughts. "What is it Chief and keep it quick I have enough problems up here."

Fred quickly outlined a plan of action concerning the object as yet more Covenant poured into the plaza. But sure as they were many in number the Marines boasted much more sheer will. Shell casing littered the ground everywhere as the Helljumpers let loose with machine gun emplacements and battle rifles and several captured covenant rifles and carbines. All over people shouted cries of anger and rage as well a few seedier remarks.

Pearce kicked a empty ammo crate over and fired with his battle rifle. The weapon sent 3 grunts to their graves and then the rest of the fire team appeared with shotguns and SMGs pouring ammunition into the Covenant platoon. The brute sergeant roared and raised his plasma rifle to attack but Pearce was already firing away at the warriors helmet. Two bursts popped off the helmet and then a fellow marine blew off the aliens head full with a shotgun. Satisfied with aliens death Pearce targeted a pair of grunts. The defenders had the high ground as well as surprise and the aliens knew that defeat was staring them in the face and within 3 minutes all that remained of the assault were a group of frightened grunts getting picked off by the 10 remaining company snipers. Once again the marines and 3 Spartan soldiers stood victorious against the hordes of Covenant.

The Private saw the excretion all around and fought the drive to just lay down and pass out cold from heat exhaustion and fatigue but it seemed neither his heart or his brain would allow him. Before he knew it he was shouting over the com freq. "MOVE IT LADIES we got plenty more of that coming and if you wanna make it through it you better get those barricades back in position. The marines got to work fast replacing spent weapons with fresh covenant plasma weapons as well as

moving wreckage and crates back into place for a defensive barrier.

Yoriskov watched as the last of the grunts were nailed by his snipers and managed a small grin that once more humans had triumphed over the exterminating menace.

Valrune observed the human structure through a rifle scope and observed the defensive emplacements scattered about fought the urge to fire and decapitate one of the unsuspecting humans but he realized that many of their snipers may follow the rifle trail and find their mark so he merely kept observing. He aimed the scope for the east side of the complex and saw the where the plaza seemed to shimmer and tracked the camouflaged warriors as they approached their goal. "For your sake you better be successful Sangheili scum." He thought as he turned toward a battalion of his cohorts. "Kill without mercy, leave none alive!" he roared as he raised his weapon. The brutes roared in a sympathy of blood freezing screams of anger and hatred and the hundred and fifty warriors rushed forward toward the plaza entrance.

7. Saving the Human Race 101

****Human city designated D-74****

****9****th**** Age of Reclamation****

****Archway of the Guide****

****15 meters south of Human Command Structure.****

'Ikanee moved swiftly toward his goal, the human structure was not far off and he could almost envision himself holding the holy artifact as he stood over the fallen humans. 3 in particular, the three demons that had caused significant hard ache for his quest as well as hundreds of his brethren would be the most pleasurable to kill. Fourteen veteran elites beside him were also in active camouflage and were loaded with everything from needlers to plasma swords armed to the teeth for the new offensive. Though the elite could not have been happier with his current mission he was dwelling in a sea of rage. A few hours ago he had been informed by some lousy Jiralhanae that a Prophet had fallen at one of the holy ring worlds and now the despicable brutes were now the guardians of the Prophets, a post that the Sangheili had held since the formation of the Covenant. Even though anger burned through him like a mighty sword he knew that the Prophet's will was law and he knew his place.

But alongside the post of guarding the Prophets the Jiralhanae were now serving as field commanders as 'Ikanee had also been informed. He had been stripped of his title and demoted down to a mere foot soldier once more. Though since the battle was still ensuing he had been allowed to keep his golden plated armor it did not reassure him in the least and he knew that if he failed he could stand to lose a lot more than the ceremonial armor. But he still intended to show the Prophets that the Sangheili were truly the fiercest warriors of the Covenant and he made sure that his weapons were ready to deal with the human defenders.

Pearce breathed hard as the fire team had a moment of peace. Everyone

one around him was breathing heavily, crouched low and reloading weapons. It had been like this for at least an hour just shooting and ducking and shooting and ducking but now they had a moments rest in the Covenant assaults. He quickly dropped the nearly empty magazine from his battle rifle and then glanced through a small hole in the barriers. All over bodies of fallen marines were strung out across the battlefield. His thought seemed to give way of reason and he almost felt like just grabbing for his pistol and ending it all. Everything had happened so fast starting with Loranzy dying right as the outer defenses gave way, Pearce had seemingly taken over a ragtag fire team since then and now all the remaining marines of the 3rd Company ODSs were all maintaining a position just outside the excavation point of some object that the Covenant had been searching for on their return to Earth.

The Helljumper popped his helmet off and wiped the visor clean of all the sweat that had collected on it. For the first time he took a long look everywhere around him. Close by him the helljumpers were bracing for another assault by the enemy. Up ahead he could just make out the ships battling in orbit trying to stem the flow of enemy troops getting groundside and over head a squadron of banshees was continuously trying to catch a group of unsuspecting marines with their fuel rod cannons. He knew soon that something would have to break and the more likely to happen would be some gap in the marine defense that would allow the enemy to just pour in slaughtering as they came. Pearce glanced back and saw two of the Spartans as they conversed with the Major inside the bunker but something caught his eye. A mere glimmer of something and then it was gone. Pearce detached his battle rifle's scope and then looked over the bunker again and saw another glimmer of something. _Crap!_ He was about to open up the general freq when a voice shouted a warning. "INCOMING!" the helljumpers snapped into action looking for the targets, and then they saw them.

A seemingly endless mass of brutes poured out into the plaza. Everywhere the marines seemed to freeze as they stared death in the face, one sergeant nearly dropped his sniper rifle as the new threat came rushing in with an assortment of heavy blades and brute shots as well as a few plasma rifles. The brutes stormed in on the site as someone finally got their wits together and started firing. Automatic weapons roared and grenades flew but it seemed nothing could slow the horde of enemies. Some marines panicked and ran back toward the bunker but most simply fired into the mob. But there was just too many. The first brutes rammed the defense barricades and howled as they engaged the marines in close combat.

Fred watched as the brutes charged in toward the marines and wanted so much to rush in to aid the helpless defenders but he had an objective. He once again looked at the Major. "You're sure sir?" he asked as Will inserted a few rounds into a shotgun. Slowly Yoriskov turned to him and nodded. "I'm sorry chief but theirs nothing left, we have no pelicans, no warthogs and our communications equipment could be next. Your only option is to trek it out through those lines of pissed-off aliens and then run like hell and I doubt even a Spartan would take those odds." The major turned and watched as more brutes poured into the plaza. He silently prayed that his marines could repel this new attack but he knew it was a long shot.

Over at the barricades the marines were fighting a losing battle. Though machine gun fire and grenades had helped stem the flow at

first it seemed if nothing short of a direct rocket would bring down any of the brutes. With lighting speed the brutes were upon the marines and used any means necessary to kill the human defenders. Pearce watched as one brute slashed open a marines stomach with a single sweep of the monster's brute shot. Blood splattered as the marine fell into shock and then crumpled to the ground. Pearce set his sights on the brute and opened fire. 9 rounds straight to the creature's head stopped the horrible being where he stood and then Pearce was already searching for a new foe.

The brutes had the marines surrounded so there was no means of escape for the marines. Some that tried to break through the lines were easily brought down by an endless mob of fangs and claws as the brutes used their primal instincts against their enemy. Several berserker brutes rushed headlong for the last gauss cannon emplacement, one of the last defensive positions that the marines could muster. The gunner saw the threat and swiveled the massive cannon in the brutes direction. The first round tore open a brute and the next ripped off a leg but the gun was slow firing and the gunner just didn't have the strength to target the enemy fast enough. The third brute leapt high and crashed into the gunner slashing the helpless men as the two beings fell. Two more brutes ripped the gun from its stand and tossed it toward another group of marines. The human weapon slammed into the group and crushed two of the five men. The last three were soon gunned down by approaching brutes.

Fred went over his options and his thoughts turned to Linda. He'd not been able to raise her on com and she had not acknowledged when he ordered the Spartans back to the command bunker but he felt that she had hidden herself once more as she always had and was watching over Will and himself. He looked again at the stone that Will had found in the shaft and looked over the symbols and then forced himself to look at all the soldiers that had fallen protecting and fighting for it. "All this death for a map" He thought to himself as he reviewed his thought again. He knew his plan well. Escape from the Plaza of the Angels and put some distance between himself and the Covenant. Then with a matter of luck Intel may have translated what the strange symbols on the rock meant and given him some clue as to what the Covenant was after.

But first the Spartans needed evac and so far they had not been able to get a single transmission back up to FLEETCOM for an hour now and Fred knew the marines wouldn't last long against the brutes. He once more gazed at the barricades and then saw it. Thoughts raced through his mind, _How did they get this close_, _how many are there_, _and how do I kill them all_. But his reflexes kicked in about the same time as Will's did. Fred fired into the first shimmer of light while Will grabbed the Major and got him clear of the immediate area. Fred's rounds pinged into a Covenant energy shield and the immediate reply was several shots from a cloaked plasma rifle. Fred ducked under the barrage and then tossed two frag grenades toward the group.

Twin explosions went off right next to 'Ikanee, he watched as his shield overloaded and died but he still rushed ahead. "For the Prophets!" someone yelled behind him as the elites rushed forward.

Will watched as fifteen crimson armored elites materialized right in front of him. He was already bursting into action as he raised a SMG

and fired into the group. Rounds hit armor and then started to burst through shattering the metallic surfaces. Will drove inwards into the group and then dove setting his arms firmly against his sides. The momentum gave him a bit of speed and he dropped like a heavy barbell right into two of the elites. Even as the elites had realized what had happened to them Will kicked one of them right in the jaw and to the Spartan's satisfaction he heard a loud snap as its jaw broke. The remaining elite swung his plasma carbine at the Spartan with tremendous force but Will easily blocked the blow and then pulled the rifle arm outward and then shoved it back inwards and heard a bone shatter as the elite quickly dropped its weapon. Then with a strong jab the human's superior strength broke the alien's chest plate and smashed the armor into the elite's rib cage pummeling it into the ground for good. Will pivoted away from a storm of plasma fire and the engaged in the deadly melee once more.

'Ikanee watched with astonishment as the first demon quickly killed two of his soldiers but the elite's eyes were watching the other human. The enemy brought up one of the primitive projectile weapons but 'Ikanee was already moving. In the blink of an eye he had grabbed his energy sword and then lunged in for the kill. But with seemingly impossible speed the demon dodged the attack and then upper-cutted the elite right in the face. 'Ikanee howled in pain as his helmet broke around his face and dung into his skin. The last thing that 'Ikanee could see was the demon keeping a good distance away from him as 'Ikanee thrashed. He remained upright and swung blindly with his energy sword and then finally managed to rip the broken helmet from his head. He looked around and saw a uniformed human staring at him with a raised weapon. 'Ikanee tried to dodge but the shotgun blast caught him right in the chest. The elite fell to the ground purple blood pouring from his wounds.

Yoriskov watched as Spartan-104 brought down another elite with a one of the alien bastard's own plasma swords. The Major popped in another shell and then searched for another target. Eleven targets remained for the three humans but the Spartans were already whirling into new attacks. One slashed at elites with a captured plasma sword while the other wielded a plasma rifle and an SMG. Although the two soldiers worked with completely different weapons they worked in unison. Fred softened up the targets and then Will wreaked havoc with the energy sword slicing through weakened armor and flesh. In a total of 3 minutes the engagement was over and the two Spartans stood victorious over the elite squad.

Pearce shoved the battle rifle into the brute's mouth and jammed the monster's carnivorous jaw from latching onto the leatherneck's head. the helljumper found a discarded pistol and fired right into the brute's gut spilling blood over the marines black armor. The alien finally died and the private dropped the spent weapon and yanked his own out of the corpse's mouth. Everywhere around him men and women were screaming and dieing as the brutes ripped through the human defenses. An unbeatable wave just kept on going as they charged head long into machine gun batteries as well as other marines and now Pearce only saw 37 FOF tags besides the Spartans and the Major. One in particular that he realized was not remaining was the last company captain that had fallen bravely against the Covenant massacre. Pearce took it upon him self and moved into action. "Fall back to the bunker! Fall back!" he yelled into his helmet com. In rapid succession the remaining helljumpers fell back toward their last refuge and the ODSTs of 3rd Company retreated for the first time in

their history.

Pearce looked back for a second at the line of brutes. They had overran the barricades and were headed off following the marines retreat and steadily gaining on them. The private willed his body to move faster and he eventually made it to the bunker along with the rest of the survivors. Breathing heavily he kneeled as marines around him fired once more. Aiming for the heads the helljumpers brought down loads of the brutes but there were just too many and without barricades at all the marines knew that this time there would be no holding action this time.

And then they came. Warthogs broke through a portion of the brute lines and race inwards towards the command bunker. The jeep's gunners rained down hellfire on the brute lines ripping up armor and flesh alike. Pearce stood up and watched as a group of flat bed warthogs also broke through the lines running down brutes as they went. "Thank God for the 88th" a voice said behind Pearce. The young private turned and saw the major looking down at him. The private snapped into attention. "Sir yes sir!" Yoriskov nodded to the soldier and then rushed out along with the rest of the ODSs. The major was first to the flat bed and he noted the Lieutenant behind the wheel. "Hell of time to show up Lieutenant, I've never been more happy to see another division in my life." The Lieutenant a black haired woman of South American descent smiled at him and then saluted. "Good to see 3rd Company has kept its reputation sir. Pile in and we can get your men out." The Major nodded as the helljumpers started climbing aboard the warthogs.

The five Scorpions were last to appear on the scene. As the warthogs loaded up their final charges the massive tanks shredded anything non human in the plaza. Luckily for the brutes their commander reacted fast and ordered a squadron of Wraiths to cover the brutes. The plasma comets arched downward and landed all over the plaza. The human drivers reacted quickly and only one was caught in the barrage before the others filed out following the warthogs.

Valrune looked at the massacre before him. In less then a minute a whole cohort of his brethren had been reduced to mangled corpses lying dead on the plaza before him. Beside him one of his captains grunted and the commander turned. "What is it?" the commander asked the smaller brute as he heard the noise of the human vehicles slowly dieing away. "The hierarchs will wish to be informed sir. Shall I file the report?" the soldier asked and Valrune saw his inevitable end before his eyes. "No my friend, I shall bear the fault. For the attack." He turned in the direction that the vehicles had left. "Track them down and kill them before they escape." The commander put his hand on the other brute's shoulder. "Perhaps you shall fair better than I have." And without a word the brute stormed off in the direction of his Phantom.

8. It's just a bleeding Rock!

**New Mombasa **

**11.1.2552 (Military Calendar) **

Corner of 5**th**** street and Ethiopia Way**

5**th**** Warthog in 88****th**** Armored Division
Convoy**

Pearce sat with his back against the warthog's flat bed fence. His breathing slowly falling back to normal he looked around at the site before him. The human convoy turned off 5th street and then on to Ethiopia Way heading along toward the group's immediate destination; escaping the ruined city. Though the remnants of 3rd Company had managed to escape into the relative safety there was still the manner of escaping the huge amount of Covenant forces that remained inside the city. The private looked down at his ruc sack found a nearly empty canteen and downed the water, the drink did little to suppress his exhaustion. Once he put the canteen back he looked for the Spartans somewhere in the convoy. Both were one warthog ahead of him conversing with the major. They seemed to be examining something as well but Pearce couldn't see it. Even though he had no idea what it was he had a fair guess that it was whatever the Covenant had been fighting so strong for in the Plaza of Angels.

Will sat conversing with Yoriskov while the two examined the Covenant artifact. On the rock the two sets of symbols gleamed a interesting light blue as if it had a power source within it. "So is this anything like you found on Reach my friend." the Major asked as Will kept focused on the object. Slightly behind the two Fred realized that the Covenant sniper round had not been tended to and set about getting to work on it as Will replied. "Not really sir, we found a crystal that had the ability to bend time and space around it. I think it's good to assume this is just like the object that we found at Sigma." Will still found it hard to realize that all that remained of the SPARTAN IIs were Fred, Linda, John, Kelly and himself. He longed for the times when the Spartans had been a strong unit fortified to fight any possible threat, not just a small group of elite warriors fighting and dieing at the last world of humanity.

Fred unlatched his two shoulder pads and then got working on his neck armor. The searing wound still burned through his skin but the superheated temperature of the blast had cauterized most of the blood vessels that it had hit when it went through his armor. The Spartan sprayed biofoam into the wound in his neck and then slapped on a battle dressing. As Fred put the last armor piece back into place an acknowledgement light winked on along with the appearance of a NAV marker that was rapidly approaching the convoy's position. Fred immediately tapped the acknowledgement light back and then got on the general freq. "Alert incoming Banshees, do not fire on the lead Banshee I repeat do not fire on the lead Banshee we have a Spartan impound."

Pearce heard the transmission and then looked toward the scream of the airships. He inserted a fresh magazine into his rifle and then turned toward the sound. All over the convoy, LAAG and GUASS gunners turned toward the sound but the convoy continued to move as it went. The marines pulled back loading levers to get fresh rounds in place and then looked down their sites.

A single banshee roared over the street and two seconds later the marines spotted what it was running from. The convoy poured ammo all over the sky ripping through the lead banshees as they came. But the amount of Banshees was staggering. The purple craft raced into the steel canyon and while most were destroyed by the marines AA fire a

group managed to race through and began launching their weapons on the convoy. Two craft launched their fuel rod cannons and sent a Warthog flipping and tumbling spilling its complement of marines. Pearce fired after the attackers trying to avenge the loss of the soldiers but the rifle just couldn't cut it. Without a good number of rockets left the convoy was getting nailed without any major AA defenses. Yoriskov kept his head high as he surveyed the battle and then made the decision. "Lieutenant get us out of here!" he shouted into his helmet mike. The lead Scorpion roared ahead and the Warthogs gunned into gear. The vehicles sped through the street and then turned down another as two Phantoms flew over a billboard and entered the conflict.

Plasma fire roared everywhere and Linda barrel rolled out of the assaults by a trio of Banshees. She put the craft into a steep dive right over the convoy. Just as she nosed up she saw a familiar figure. A soldier in olive green armor fired right below her approach vector and nailed the enemies behind her craft. Two Banshees fell from the sky behind her and crashed into a abandoned supermarket. Linda kept the craft low and then sped ahead of the convoy and prepared the ship for landing.

Will saw Linda's craft as it came down and turned to the driver of the Warthog. "Sergeant get us along side that Banshee now!" Will fired into another bunch of Banshees as he felt the vehicle accelerate.

Pearce ducked his head low to avoid the immense plasma fire but a number of marines on the flat bed were not so lucky. Men who he had fought with for the last eternity seemed were killed in an instant by the continuous stream of weapons fire. He looked longingly for a launcher or something and then it dawned on him. He grabbed one of the C-15 claymore explosives from his pack along with some heavy tape and got to work. He grabbed the remaining three fragmentation grenades from his equipment belt and then tapped them all to the bigger explosive. and then looked up to the sky. Almost completely covering the sky enemy Banshees flew everywhere and it was not hard to spot a concentration of them. Pearce pulled the pin on a single grenade and then threw the Claymore with all the strength he could muster.

The Banshee pilots were having a field day. Where just minutes ago an entire horde of Brutes had been beaten to a pulp the battlefield now was a beacon of glory for the pilots. They had ambushed the human convoy right when they thought they were safe and save for a few losses the fleet of fighters were easily maneuvering out of any small arms fire the humans could throw at them. But as one Elite pilot zoomed inward to attack one of the vehicles his targeting monitor located and scanned an object rising toward him. The object seemed to have human words on it and the Elite zoomed in on the phrase. 3 words were all that the pilot saw.

FRONT TOWARDS ENEMY.

As the grenade fired off its explosion in turn triggered both the claymore as well as the other two grenades. Whoever had assigned such close grouped squadrons would clearly be rethinking their strategy over this new development. Starting as a blossom of crimson and yellow destructive power the explosion started its wave of destruction. The entire explosion took with it twelve Banshees as

well as another five that crashed into ones that were falling. Pearce let out a sigh of relief that at least half assed schemes like that still managed to pull off some victories. "Nice shot amigo!" someone yelled over the com just before he heard the Major's stern voice. "Cut the chatter marines we still have a job to do." Pearce grabbed hold of the railing as the vehicles increased their speed away from the battle. "Yes sir!" Pearce and other marines all replied. As the vehicles turned down yet another boulevard Pearce heard the Major once more. "Oh and Private, nice shot."

The 88th Division Lieutenant gunned the lead Warthog into an intersection devoid of any road signs or street names. Trusting her instinct she turned left across the street crossing and was rewarded with a industrial area that had quite a number of low bridges that went across the wide street. "Little bit better than that meat grinder we just left." She thought to herself as the other vehicles turned.

Linda popped the cockpit open and hurried away from the Banshee. All around wreckage was pouring from the sky at some fool's act of daring but the falling shrapnel did not exactly pail in comparison to the deadly Banshees that they had been before. She dodged a falling fuel rod cannon that exploded just before impact and then she rolled under the frame of another Banshee. Just as she stood up she heard it. Extending one hand out for the other Spartan to grab, Will clenched her fist and hoisted her up. Although in the armor the Spartans were a considerable weight Will easily helped Linda onto the Warthog's flat bed. A single acknowledgement light from Fred winked on and then in unison both Will and Linda winked theirs on. Once more the convoy was safely under cover with no enemies trailing them.

Still going as fast as their vehicles could go with the weight they carried the drivers of the 88th continued on through the street ways of the city. The industrial district gave them a few minutes peace before they were out once more in the narrow canyons and once more Covenant forces were their but this time the marines were prepared. The first warthogs inwards fired right at a Phantom. As the jeep rushed under it the Phantom tried to get a shot in but the jeep was too fast. Following up the first jeep one of the Scorpions targeted the Phantom's weapons and opened fire. The round slammed clear through the purple craft and the ship veered downwards and crashed into a transit bus. But as soon as the Phantom was down Covenant troops rushed into the scene. The convoy raced through the street with the marines firing in all directions. But even as their vehicles sped past the aliens many were taken down by plasma fire. Pearce himself had to lose his helmet when a plasma rifle burned off the top layering. The private hurled the helmet back at the enemy and watched as it connected with a Grunt making the tiny alien trip and fall on a pair of Elite corpses and then resumed firing. The Warthog ahead of the carrier one had a Gauss cannon and was shelling a pair of Ghosts as it went down the street. The Spartan manning the weapon was quite effective and toasted the two combat vehicles before they knew what hit them and then the convoy turned once more.

The Warthogs and Scorpions screamed down a street firing and engaging Covenants on all sides and broke through another stockade that the aliens had set up. Will fired into a troop carrier and was rewarded as the Elite commander was toppled by his own vehicle. Quickly the Spartan switched targets to engage a Phantom. The faster moving human vehicles were making it a pain for the ship's crew to keep up but

they continuously barraged area of the stream of vehicles. Will fired into the ship but even the level of firepower from the cannon couldn't puncture the dense armor.

Pearce had no idea where the group of vehicles were heading but he hoped that wherever they were going they got their soon and that there would be a lot of human guns waiting their to eliminate the remaining Covenant forces. But he couldn't think of anyplace that was safe on Earth now he hoped that someone high up was working on a plan at just that minute. Suddenly a cry of pain was heard and Pearce saw a the jeep's gunner fell hi chest bleeding profusely from a needler wound. Pearce slung his rifle onto his back and went over to the soldier. The man lay shivering as the ODST got to him. "Ju ju just too many of them s sir." The man's eyes were erratic as his pulse winded down and Pearce grabbed his shaking hand. "No, you've done good and you're going to still do that soldier just stay with me. Medic!" Pearce cried out as he felt the pulse continue to weaken. The man looked around at the landscape before him and then returned his eyes to Pearce. "Pro promise me, they wont w win sir. Promise." Pearce looked back at the marine and saw the trajectory that the man's eyes were watching and knew the man was gone.

For a few seconds Pearce longed to have known the man and been able to talk with him and mourned his death but he had to stay strong no matter what it caused him. He cursed the Covenant and their damn stupid war and realized just how many innocent people had died at the hands of their countless and merciless soldiers and weapons and the rage toward them burned deep inside the Helljumper. As he closed the man's eyes he wiped some grime off his and then stood up to approach the jeep's LAAG. He pulled the charging lever loading a round and then searched for a target. Just like in the Plaza they were everywhere and Pearce pulled the trigger. The rounds tore through two Elites and their Grunt escorts and then Pearce swung the gun around and rained hell fire down on a group of Jackals who had arrived to take more life. Everywhere on the flat bed of the Warthog spent shell casings littered were littered and the three remaining marines moved towards the driver's seat to avoid the heated metal while still taking occasional shots at nearby enemies. Pearce yelled out in anger and trailed heavy rounds up into a red Elite and watched as the alien drowned in a pool of his own blood. As the Warthog smashed over a group of Grunts the humans continued on their escape.

**Human City Designated D-74 **

9**th**** Age of Reclamation **

Archway of the Guide

Inside the Archway

The Elite slowly opened his eyes and then closed them instantly. A harsh light was staring right back at him and then he realized it was only the planet's main star. 'Ikanee once more opened his eyes and when realizing that he lay on the ground he started to get up. And then a searing knifelike pain burnt through and he recalled where he was. His thoughts raced as he finally managed to sit up doing his best to ignore the pain. Where were the humans and what had become of the artifact. He thought that he'd seen a glimpse of it just before the attack but he saw nothing around him that looked like it and then he remembered. What he did see brought a small rise of hope to him in

his current position. The entire holy site was drenched in the bodies and bodies of Jiralhanae as well as blood to boot. It seemed that everywhere the ground was blood soaked and it had corpses strewn over. The Elite found one of his own race and moved toward the blue armored soldier. "What has happened, did we recover the sacred stone?" the slightly smaller Elite bowed his head low and then replied. "No commander, that fool of a Brute had his troops rush in behind your assault and then the humans brought in their tanks and support vehicles." He motioned to where skid marks and a lot of flat Brutes dotted the concrete floor. "They evacuated the humans and stole the sacred stone. Our forces are tracking them through the city now." 'Ikanee clicked his mandible in acknowledgement. "And the Brute commander what happened to him." The other alien managed a Sangheili grin and then replied. "Take a guess commander?"

9. Betrayle heard around the World

Author's note. I started this story awhile ago maybe even a year and with close arrival of Halo 3 now at hand I felt now would be a nice time to have something to keep my attention from it.

Disclaimer. I do not work in any way with Bungie Studios. This is my rendition of what I think might have happened during the Master Chief's absence. Thanks and enjoy the continuation of A Helljumper's Flight

****Outside Human City Designated D-74****

****9****th**** Age of Reclamation****

****Aboard the Frigate, **_**Bold Reckoning**_**

Bold Reckoning**** Command Bridge****

Valrune entered the door to the command bridge of the Bold Reckoning. The ship had managed to break through the primates orbital defenses and arrive planet side to support the ongoing search for the Holy Guide. Earlier Valrune had left the ship brimming with eagerness to strip the Sangheili of his rank and then complete the task before him. But now he was being escorted to the bridge as a failure to the ship's mission. Two fellow Jiralhanae clad in the ceremonial armor of the Hierarch guards stood next to him as they escorted him through the bridge.

Although the Jiralhanae had been officially named as the Prophets guard as well as the new commanders there was still an abundance of Sangheili manning the ship's command center. But he was proud to watch as his cohort were still in control and ordered the other beings around like the filth they were. The three warriors finally passed the command center and then entered the communications chamber. Inside a minor Prophet sat hovering above the ground in a floating chair as he reviewed a data screen. The beings motley skin was heavily wrinkled from years of service under the hierarchs.

Now his face was heavy with a bit of anger and almost remorse and he only acknowledged Valrune's presence when he heard the Brute's helmet clink to the floor as Valrune bowed low and deep. "Incompetent fool, you have let those filthy primates once again grasp a sacred artifact." The Prophet shouted at the Jiralhanae, as he entered.

"You're lucky that I don't have your own brethren slay you down this moment." Valrune didn't raise his head and then replied. "If you have brought me to this place to kill me then why don't you just do it!" at these words the Prophet looked at one of the Brutes. The soldier paused for a second and then slammed the butt of his plasma carbine into Valrune's neck.

Valrune buckled under the heavy strike and then quickly raised his head back to the Prophet. "You are a very formidable soldier commander, but what I have brought you here to carry out may very well be ahead of your skills as well." The Prophet turned to a projector and brushed his hand against the machinery. One of the ancient holy rings appeared before the collection of beings. "You recall that the ancient stone also held a map to another sacred ring do you not." The Hierarch asked Valrune as he finally was allowed to rise. "Yes noble Prophet, I heard that the Prophet of Regret was murdered on the very ring you speak of." The old Prophet tipped his head slightly and then quickly turned back to the Brute. "An unfortunate turn of events yes but Regret decided to rush things but he will be remembered as he once was but this new matter is not related directly to Regret. Something happened on Halo, perhaps it was the changing of the guards and then a possible insurrection but the Hierarchs have given the order."

The Brute looked up to the other being with cautious eyes. He glimpsed at the two Brutes beside him and then spoke once more. "And what orders are those noble Prophet." Valrune asked quietly unafraid of any further blow that could be dealt upon him. "One that I believe all Jiralhanae would rejoice in," the Prophet turned around in his grav chair and then once again spoke. "the complete and utter execution, of all the traitorous Sangheili."

****New Mombasa ****

****11.1.2552 (Military Calendar) ****

****Heading East on the 811 Freeway****

****5****th**** Warthog in 88****th**** Armored Division
Convoy****

Sleep never came easy for a Spartan. It seemed ever since the war had started there had scarcely been a moment when any of the mysterious cohort could stop to admire their work, there was always a new battle a new threat a new enemy. Now Fred watched as the seemingly peaceful sky lit up with explosions and fierce streaks of lightning. He faintly hoped it was just natural weather effects but he knew that the battle had resumed and that once more the outgunned outmanned human fleet would once again have its hands full. Of course the night was not all bad, it seemed in the rush of things the Covenant had not managed to bring enough thermal gear and the column had managed to avoid them for the time being. The Spartan realized to take solace in such little effect was the sign of impending doom and that soon enough he would once more hear the hiss of plasma discharges and the roar of banshees but the night time would offer peace to the tired soldiers for a few more hours.

PFC Pearce lay on the flatbed of the Warthog reminiscing of a past lost to him and the other marines. A past where no one would have considered any enemy could even gaze upon Earth's lush green lands

and blue waters. Now amidst roughly a hundred men and women the smell of sweat and body odor was one of the few good things about being behind enemy lines in a city already mostly destroyed during an attack made the previous week. It seemed so long ago when he had been in stasis aboard the UNSC Destroyer Patton with nothing but his thoughts. Now he continued to clean his BR55's barrel making sure when the time came that he would be ready and willing to do all that he could in the defense of humanity.

Mourning came all too soon for the Orbital Drop Shock Troopers of 3rd Company, as the first rays of sunlight cascading through the ruined cityscape also brought waves of banshees. The battle hardened turret gunners easily swept through the first wave but now on the fifth attack the vehicle column had pushed it into overdrive pushing onward to their eventual destination.

Fred and Will barely paused for a second between firing their weapons. Fred at the back of the Warthog firing storms of rounds at the incoming banshees never had to stop to acquire new targets while Will had to continuously realign his missile launcher to lock onto the next enemy. The banshee pilots did error a lot in favor of the humans. Like the day before the pilots all seemed a little inexperienced in their vehicles but the Spartans were willing to let that slide. Even the marines who had taken a horrible beating when the brutes had charged in at their last stand easily worked through the aerial attackers making the most of the combine turret and missile defensive capabilities. Within 2 hours of the first assault the ruins of waves of banshees were littered in the wake of the armored column.

****New Mombasa ****

****11.1.2552 (Military Calendar) ****

****88****th**** Armored Division Lead Vehicle****

****Near Camp Bastogne****

"Alright marines everyone out we've reached the rendezvous." A voiced squawked over the com channel as Pearce took in his surroundings and ordered his fellow marines out onto the hard gravel road. Over the loud speaker harsh oldies music blared along with the occasional announcement from the CO. As he took off his helmet Pearce ran a hand through his short hair and then wiped the outline of grime from his face. Just as he was getting accustomed to some of the new sights his com unit sounded. "Private Pearce report to the HQ immediately." Leaving Olfren in charge of finding food and supplies for his team he hurried off to the largest building he saw. Once he entered an MP saw his uniform tag and ushered him into the command station. Inside two of the Spartans stood at attention while the major and an officer that Pearce wasn't familiar with sat at a steel desk. "PFC Pearce reporting sir!" he snapped a sharp salute. The major was the first to respond.

"At ease Private," Pearce nodded and stood at attention. "Pearce this is Brigadier General Jellir, he's in charge of Camp Bastogne and for the moment in charge of the next step of our operation." The General moved over to the marine. A tall man probably around 63 Jellir seemed every bit as imposing as a Spartan minus the armor but it was his eyes that set him apart. Icy blue eyes stared at Pearce and the

marine wondered just how much damage the general could do even just unarmed with a stare let alone a weapon. "First off I'd like to congratulate you private on surviving the engagement at the plaza. Both the major and the chiefs here tell me that at no time did any of NCO's quit or give quarter to our enemy and I'd just like to say Earth needs men like you more and more in these dark times. He went back to the desk and withdrew a tiny box.

"For your bravery and your continued vigilance I award you the Star of Valor." The officer placed the black box into Pearce's hands with delicate measure and then continued. "Also you are promoted to Sergeant effective immediately. This conflict has seen a lot of brave officers go but I'm sure that you shall make all of them proud." He rested a hand on Pearce's shoulder and then continued.

As he returned to his desk he went on turning to the Spartans. "Now then gentlemen let us get down to business." He held up the mysterious rock that had cost the lives of so many good soldiers almost a little to carelessly in Pearce's mind. "We have stolen something the enemy holds very dear, lets get to work making sure its not the last thing we steal from those alien bastards."

10. Collateral damage is our Creed

**New Mombasa **

**11.2.2552 (Military Calendar) **

Camp Bastogne

4**th**** Day of Secondary Covenant Invasion. **

As the 3rd Company Helljumpers got accustomed to their new surrounding, most were more than happy to be somewhere where they could relax for however long. The camp was located roughly 13 kilometers southeast of Matuga. The area had recently been converted from a storage facility into a forward command base. The exterior fence had been replaced with huge rectangular slabs of concrete barriers allowing for a much sturdier outer defense. Bolstering the concrete barrier was server 50 caliber autocannons routed to the HQ where the General's AI Norman maintained the rest of the bases automated defenses such as the secondary minefield of Lotus Anti Tank mines that would activate for a nasty surprise for the Covenant. Although not a Class A fortress by any means but it was better than the butcher fields that the Plaza of Angels had been turned into.

Although a pair of Pelican Gunships had managed to destroy several connecting bridges out of New Mombasa along with a special ops squad eliminating key tunnels the Covenant were not far behind the 3rd Company. It was only a few hours before the aliens caught up to them or just decided to glass the area. But both the Spartans and the Major were willing to stack their lives against the Covenant destroying their sacred artifact. As the majority of the helljumpers patched up their wounds and grabbed what shuteye they could manage the major was hard at work coordinating some form of evacuation for his company and the rest of the Division. The com gear could barely make it through all the Covenant interference let alone get up to any of the remaining defensive stations in orbit.

"Stand to men we have enemies imminent, prepare to engage." Yoriskov shouted over the TacCom stirring the marines back into the tempo of battle. Snipers pulled their loading levers and got back to work thinning the crowd. The stationary guns flared up and storms of Grunts fell to the metallic devastation. Behind the cannon fodder jackal pairs rushed in supported by a group of Brutes. The furred beast seemed even more blood thirsty then usual as they quickly closed the gap to the human defenses.

Once more Fred Will and Linda set their sights on the invaders. They expertly navigate the multitude of enemies working from the top command down to the rank and file. The Brutes were angrier than usual but it didn't stop most from blindly running toward their enemy full of hate. Linda brought two down in quick succession with her rifle while Fred and Will unleashed with missile launchers into the larger groups. Massive Plumes of smoke and charred flesh burst from the ground where numbers of their oppressors had been moments before. Only a few Brutes seemed to be remembering their duties and continued to order in air strikes and Ghost assaults. The one good thing Fred noticed was the complete lack of Elites in the enemies arsenal. While he knew it was not beyond the Covenant to do something sneaky like they had the previous engagement but their had always been some level of Elite activity among their ranks. He pushed the thoughts away as a Grunt with a fuel rod cannon fired in his direction. The Spartan rolled left and then fired into little aliens knees.

Pearce smashed his battle rifle into the Jackal's weak skull and then kicked outward connecting with the grunt next to him. "Squad rally on me!" he roared as he fired a quick burst toward the next mass of enemies. Private Olfren and another Helljumper appeared next to him firing with their SMGs. The hail of gun fire shredded through the oncoming assault but a Ghost filled their sights moments after they had finished the foot soldiers. The purple craft rocketed toward them and only Pearce's intervention saved the three. He extended his arms out while falling downward pinning the three marines to the ground as the attack vehicle soared over them.

Olfren rolled over priming a captured plasma grenade and hurled it toward the Brute. The bright sapphire explosive latched onto the Brute's shoulder pad and the alien cursed. The Brute tried futilely to rip the grenade from his shoulder but it had already seared to the metallic surface. Pearce and his squad mates shielded their eyes from the explosion. The stench that filled the air made Pearce almost gag as he turned back to the next wave of attackers. "Olfren how many more of those grenades do you have?" the private stared up at him and then checked his bandolier. "Bout three why sarge?" he followed Pearce's gaze to the new enemy. "Because I seriously doubt we have enough grenades for that." 500 Brute piloted Ghosts roared toward the marines as the realization dawned on the human defenders.

The massive storm of enemy vehicles would have stunned even the best trained academy troops but the company was not about to let something get in their way anymore. Humanity had gone through enough running, and none of Helljumpers or their vehicle counterparts were about to give up just yet.

Will dove over the battlement squaring in on the lead Ghost. The Spartan's shield shimmered as plasma boiled past him. Using his superior reflexes he grabbed onto the vehicles sleek purple skin and

then propelled himself further. He expertly withdrew his combat knife and drove it deep into the Brute's surprised face. The limp body sank onto the pavement as Will turned the craft around. The Spartan pushed the craft throttle to the extreme and withdrew one of his last explosive charges from his belt. He looked over the device and punched in the activation code. He stowed the HAVOC mini nuke into the steering console. With the craft narrowed down on the biggest concentration of Ghosts and then he dislodged himself from the explosive missile.

Pearce cursed at his rifle again as he tried to un jam his weapon for the fourth time in the two days he had been Earth side. Although Camp Bastogne did have a small weapons armory he had chosen to stick with his rifle that had seen him through so many hard times before. When the round finally cleared the chamber Pearce found a new target amidst the see of sleek armor and inhuman flesh. It took all his will to ignore the aching pain coursing through his right shoulder all the way down to the balls of his feet. He knew he could have died so many times before but he knew that so many depended on him to survive and press on no matter what the cost against his body and mind. As he found a new target his mind rushed back to reality and he sent a Brute into whatever awaited the creature in the next life. Before he sighted a new target a miniature sun burst from amidst the mass of Ghosts. The explosive shock wave seemed to slow down time. Each marine at the exterior wall was lifted off their feet by the force and some barely managed to push out with their hands to try to cushion the blow before the impact.

Fred's vision had been saved by the MkVI armor's exterior control system just as the nuke went explosive. The system had flashed on the densest polarization layer on the Spartan's visor and it took him a few milliseconds to realize just what had happened. He knew Will as one of the last demolition centered Spartans and that on his last trip to Songnam he had walked away with some classified munitions that he couldn't even tell his fellow Spartans about. Whatever it was, Fred noted it might buy them a few more minutes. In the wake of the Ghost attack a squadron of Wraiths and a full wing of Banshees appeared a bout half a klick from the camp and Fred knew their time was just about to run out.

11. If it works dont fix it

****Disclaimer-** In this chapter I used characters from Eric Nylund's book ******The Ghost of Onyx****** I use them solely to forward the story of the Spartans since in that story the pelican crew mentioned is the team that ferries them while they are still on Earth.******

****New Mombasa ****

****11.2.2552 (Military Calendar) ****

****UNSC C-23 Destroyer **_**Thermopylae**_**

****Holding position 6400 kilometers over South African Protectorate****

Lt. Commander Genaun sat nervously at the command chair of the _Thermopylae. _The vessel had cleared the single remaining Mars Orbital Shipyard 2 days before and now on its third mission amidst a

losing conflict it was now under the command of its third captain and approaching its 15th battle zone since it broke free of Mars gravity.

Still while many of the ship's officers had fallen through the repeated action the new Destroyer had been run through, a substantial number of good and experience crewmen had managed to survive. Now the ship was running at 62 efficiency and had no onboard combat personnel. As the mid size destroyer sailed through the dark cloud cover Genaun had his sensors officer running complete scans making sure no unwanted visitors decided to descend on the ship. With only one MAC cannon operational and over two thirds of their Archer Pod missiles depleted from recent action the ship would have a major problem if any Covenant capitol ships broke the defense ring.

But today their mission was simple, establish contact with the remnants of 3rd Company and evacuate all personnel via the flight of pelicans that had been assembled onboard the ship. So far however they had not been able to break through the com jamming and Genaun would have to decide soon rather to dispatch the pelicans into the blind or pull out and return to space. The mission window was getting smaller by the second and what garbled transmissions they could intercept didn't sound too reassuring. His XO and acting navigation officer Lt. Ryang stood next to him, although just a few weeks out of the academy Ryang had proved to be a valuable asset during the _Thermopylae_'s 2nd action against a Covenant Carrier where the _Thermopylae_ the _Harbinger_ and the _Vienna_ had broken through the first Covenant line to engage with the larger vessels. Only the _Thermopylae_ had survived in part to Ryang expert navigation through the storms of plasma discharges that had been flooding the battle zone.

Now being used as a simple hard top retrieval his XO seemed despaired that they were not up their fighting along with the rest of the fleet. But his mood had changed when Admiral Hood had informed them their mission would involve the evacuation of the famed Blue team that had been singularly destroying many of the ground based Covenant operations. Now right before the Commander issued an order the Lt. moved to the sensor board to run another scan of the area, this time searching for the concentrations of Covenant forces that the sensors had identified.

He quickly narrowed his search pattern between three areas of massive troop deployment and relayed his findings back to the Commander. Genaun quickly scanned the contents and realized that if they divided their pelicans into these three areas they would have a better chance of dining the lost company but they would also have a better chance at being picked apart by the Covenant fliers in the area. As he looked at the mission clock he knew if he didn't act fast it wouldn't matter if the pelicans ever left the launch bay. He got on the com unit and issued a ship wide transmission. "All Pelican crews launch when ready form three flights and prepare for immediate search and rescue."

Sergeant Laura "Smokes" Tanner of the 103rd Airborne quickly strapped into the cockpit pilot station of her pelican. Beside Laura, her crew chief Corporal Jim Higgins got to work on an emergency preflight checklist quickly scanning to make sure all diagnostics on the bird read green. Once the preflight list was checked and then rechecked Laura stared up at the launch bay. Already the _Thermopylae_'s main

launch bay had started to open. The huge maw could easily stomach two Longsword fighters side by side and had been recently converted to house the pelican wing. The thirteen ships powered on around the same time and soon the entire hangar was filled with an immense buzzing. The crews had all been briefed on what to expect. Massive Covenant forces along with a huge number of Banshee patrols along with the possibility that one of the Covenant cruisers upstairs might want to join the party. As the first three pelicans raised up and exited the bay Tanner rested her hands on the pilot yoke. As Higgins popped a fresh piece of tobacco gum and made sure the loading bay door was secured before turning to Tanner. "Well Sgt I've said it before and I'll say it again. As long as we don't crash I can cope." Laura managed a small smile as their turn came up. Precisely maneuvering the craft she exited the ship's launch bay and proceeded Earth bound.

****New Mombasa ****

****11.2.2552 (Military Calendar)****

****Camp Bastogne****

****(4****th**** Day of Covenant Secondary Invasion)****

Fred fired into the mob. Bracing himself back to back with Will the two Spartans continuously fired into the approaching Brutes that almost surrounded them. After the nuke had cleared the majority of Ghosts away the Covenant leaders had seen to making sure that they would not suffer such a humiliation again. Wings of Banshees continuously rocketed over their position barraging the area again and again while a stampede of Brutes and Grunts had poured over the base's exterior wall and across the courtyard to the five buildings that made up the base. 5 meters outside the base Fred and Will held their position amongst the rubble to buy the marines as much time to fall back into the safety of the buildings. Fred had switched to a captured Covenant carbine and was lancing out to any target he could find while Will worked through the crowds with a pair o SMGs. Linda continued to snipe her opponents from inside the buildings and she would inform the two when a concentration approached that would warrant Will and Fred to enter the building.

Until then however Fred and Will would continue to decimated the Covenant forces surrounding them. Bullets lanced outward while plasma hurtled forward. The two Spartans expertly navigated the hell storm of searing plasma but continued to elect targets to fire upon. Will threw a pair of frag grenades into the crowd and then the two turned 180 degrees. Facing new groups of targets Fred noticed some of the Brutes were wearing metallic armor. Not full body suits but helmets and shoulder padding with an occasional knee guard. The armor was still relatively thin though so it didn't impair Fred's AP rounds from shredding a Brute's knee causing the creature to crumble into its allies.

Will fired away with his SMG and then heard a click as the magazine ran dry. For a moment surprise issued into the Spartan's mind, he had calculated that the clip had over 40 rounds left before he needed to reload. He went over the small mistake in his mind and recalculated wishing he had an AI to coordinate the simple equation. He had been wrong, but how he'd never made the mistake before and then the realization dawned on him. So simple a mistake was obviously caused

by his concentration flying through so many things at once, the enemies, possible threat assessment, team bio and overall situation all were keeping his mind running faster at harder than it had for some time. In a second he had the weapons reloaded and was back to work. He'd mention the mistake to Fred later but he knew he would need to recalibrate some of his systems to make sure such a thing wouldn't happen again.

Pearce fired through the small window in the building along with the rest of his fire team. The BR55 fired a 3 round volley into a Grunt's face. The little alien dropped the plasma grenade it had primed and the surprised Brute next to it dove to escape the blast but it was too late. Amidst the chaos and confusion he saw the pair of Spartans warding off a avalanche of enemies and wondered just how they remained calm and collective in so crazy a situation. Twin reports of a sniper rifle brought him back into the battle and he lined up his next opponent in his sights.

Tanner was running the scanner again trying to isolate any UNSC signal but even the E-Band channel was silent. 'How am I supposed to find anything in this mess.' She thought as her 4 ship group raced through the city trying to locate the camp. With so much of the immediate area damaged from all the battles there was no distinguishable building left for a point of origin to be made. It was like finding a needle in a haystack except the haystack was a massive invasion force and the needle was fellow humans getting closer and closer to death.

She rolled the dropship to the left and then ran the scan once more. This time an object appeared almost instantly. She could figure out how the object had evaded her scans before as the scanner was saying it was at least four stories high. She turned to Higgins, "Run the scan again that's got to be some mistake." The crew chief quickly recalibrated the sensor and then ran the scan once more. This time it came back positive. Tanner immediately switched on the E-Band. "Attention all UNSC forces please respond! You have a Covenant Scarab closing in on your position! Repeat this is Sergeant Tanner to any nearby UNSC forces, Danger Imminent please respond!"

12. Aint helping my nerves that's for sure

**New Mombasa **

11.2.2552 (Military Calendar)

Camp Bastogne

(4**th**** Day of Covenant Secondary Invasion)**

At Camp Bastogne a vast number of humanity held its breath. The complete exterior of the camp was overridden by Covenant forces hell bent on destroying the base and claiming their prize, an ancient artifact what would spell doom for humanity. Strewn throughout the camp's courtyard dozens of bodies bearing the uniform of UNSC marines were littered while the vast majority of other bodies were alien creatures sprawled out in death. A huge fire fight continued throughout the camp however, as the valiant marines fired from the shelter of the camp's buildings hoping to stem the enemy tide. Inside three Spartans also fought side by side with their marine

counterparts. Though almost alien themselves in their green armor their resolve to fight the Covenant and save Earth was as firm as ever.

Sergeant Davin Pearce and his five men fire team had spent the past two days fighting the invaders. Although they had lost many including their former Sergeant they would not stand idly by and let the Covenant forces conquer the area without significant loss to the aliens. The group was situated on the west wall of a small office firing from blast holes made by the Covenant Banshees that continuously bombarded the area with their fuel rod cannons. A scream echoed through his mind breaking his concentration of lining up a Brute in his sights. He turned to his right and saw the pale face of private Kently. The smaller marine had a deep gaping hole just above his beltline and started to fall to the floor. Plasma rounds vaporized the concrete frame near Pearce as he caught the fellow soldier. Near the two Corporal Olfren knelt down beside him, sweat and grime covering most of his face.

The erratic pulse flowing through Kently told Pearce what he already knew. When the private ceased shaking Pearce closed the marine's eyes and then laid the body to rest. It was not the only body situated in the room sadly. Ten other marines with varying plasma burns dotted the small space and it was only a matter of time before the smell would fill the entire camp. Words escaped Pearce as he took the small rest to reload his weapon. As he slowly slid a fresh clip into place the exhaustion coursed through him. He fell to the ground his back set against the wall. As he slowly turned he noticed each and every face that answered back at him. U'Toni, mortar fire, Griegs Covenant sniper fire, Twanley, Jacobs, Labole and so many others. All fierce marines who had strived so hard and had even survived the engagement at the Plaza of Angels only to die now.

So many times before they had made it through against so many odds but now the weight had fallen on Pearce and couldn't convince his body to get back up. A firm hand grasped the Sergeant's and hauled him back up. Pearce turned and met the stare. The golden visor of one of the Spartan's stared back at him, even during the time he had fought with them he had no way of knowing which one it was. The armored warrior laid a hand on the marines shoulder and looked back to the open hole in the concrete. "I wouldn't ask this of you if I didn't need it marine." The calm cool voice spoke to him and then placed the Battle Rifle in the Sergeant's hands. "But you have to fight on no matter the cost, your marines need you."

With the small amount of energy spurred into him Pearce turned back to the fighting. Through the cries of pain from the wounded near him he pushed on. 'Soon enough fate will cause my death but until then, I will fight, no matter what amount of pain is in body.' The Battle Rifle spat three rounds into the Brute's chest, but the new body armor the creature's had donned was greatly hampering the marines efforts to kill their foes. He couldn't understand why they had suddenly taken to wearing the armor but he knew it didn't mean squat unless he killed them.

Fred ripped the Jackal's arm out from its socket and placed the creature's shield in front of him. The Brute's Spiker rounds rebounded off the energy shield and while some flew off into every direction some soared back and penetrated the Brute's armor. The huge beast howled in anger before finally dying. The Spartan tossed the

dismembered limb away and then brought up his Magnum Pistol. He fired away downing two grunts and another jackal until the pistol ran dry.

As he began reloading the weapon a shadow crossed over him. The Brute's warcry signaled him to the imminent danger, Fred rolled away just as the alien brought down its weapon. Fred had never seen the mysterious weapon before but when it impacted on the point where Fred had just been was destroyed by the impact of the two handed club. The helmeted brute roared and then swung the weapon once more towards Fred. The Spartan stepped in quickly and reached out and grabbed the weapon. The two beings fought with all their might trying to rip the weapon from the other's grasp but with the amount of adrenaline flowing through the Spartan his strength matched the Brute's fury. Three milliseconds later Fred saw his opportunity. In one fluid motion Fred swung the Brute to the right and then let go. The armored creature flew away right into the path of the Hunter directly behind him.

The blue armored warrior let loose with its cannon and the beam of blinding green ripped through the Brute's armor and skin. Unfortunately the beam continued on and Fred narrowly missed connecting with it as he fell to a crouched position. As the Hunter realized just what had happened it rearmed to finish its work. Fred moved quickly and picked up the deceased Brute's weapon. He found an activation switch and then hurled the hammer at the Hunter. The alien tried to swerve but it was too late. The hammer impacted on the Hunter's skull and a orange liquid spilled out from below it's blue helmet.

****New Mombasa ****

****11.2.2552 (Military Calendar)****

****10 Kilometers over Matuga ****

****Pelican Alpha 32****

Sgt. Laura Tanner relayed the message again. Once again only static answered her back. Higgins fiddled through the com frequencies again. "Still nothing sarge, maybe theyâ€¦" he trailed off and then returned his gaze to the cockpit window before him. Tanner didn't respond but continued the craft downward a few more kilometers. The mission clock window was still shrinking and it was only a matter of time before the Commander would recall them. On the radio the com channel squawked. For a moment Tanner thought it was the marines finally replying but the Commander's stern voice was all that filled her ears.

"Attention squadron leader we have a Covenant cruiser inbound on our position. Unless you find those marines soon you need to pull back immediately. We're running out of time here." Static returned to the com channel. "Well at least the com system is still working." Higgins noted and then looked back at the radar where they were still tracking the enemy Scarab. The massive crawler was slowly but steadily continuing along its course but the ship's crew had no idea when it would arrive at the camp. "We have to find them soon."

The pelican passed over another one time sky scraper and the onboard map told them they were just about to reach the outskirts of Matuga.

"Alert this is Brigadier General Jellir at Camp Bastogne to all UNSC forces. We are under attack by a major Covenant taskforce we need immediate reinforcements now our defenses are just about to fail" Tanner quickly activated her helmet link and replied. "Attention General this is Sgt. Tanner, me and my flight are here to evac you and your men!" then she remembered. "Also General you have a Covenant Scarab closing on your position be alert." For a second the silence made her think that the channel had been lost and then a grumbled curse made her realize the General was evaluating his situation. "Then you better get here pronto Sgt. we can barely hold as it is. A Scarab comes down here then you're gonna have a whole load of memorials you'll need to make. Jellir out!"

The signal ended but Higgins had isolated the signal through all the Covenant jamming, he also relayed to the commander that they had found the camp. The signal was weak but they finally had their goal. Tanner pushed the Pelican's engines to the limit in a race against time to save the marine forces. As the ship rocketed over the cityscape the com channel once again squawked and the Commander's voice filled the cockpit. "Attention squadron leader we have new mission parameters about the evacuation. We don't have enough time to get the rest of the wing to your location so the three of you are on your own." Tanner thoughts raced and then she replied. "Commander we only have three Pelicans here we won't be able to evacuate everyone at the camp. Please advise."

A small silence answered her back until commander spoke once more. "I'm aware of the situation sergeant, HIGHCOM has ordered your ship as the priority one shuttle for the three Spartans and some marines. I repeat the Spartans are your priority, the two other boats are to fill as many marines as possible is that clear?" Tanner gritted her teeth as she forced the answer out of her throat. "Yes sir, I'll expect orders on where to drop the packages off after we evac them." She said trying to keep the anger out of her voice. "Affirmative squadron leader, you have your orders. Genaun out." Higgins looked towards his pilot trying to figure out whether to say anything or not. "Don't worry Laura, those marines are tough they'll be able to hump it out to the next safe zone." His words rang hollow in Laura's ears but she appreciated his effort. "I sure hope so, if not what were about to do is as cold as they come."

End
file.